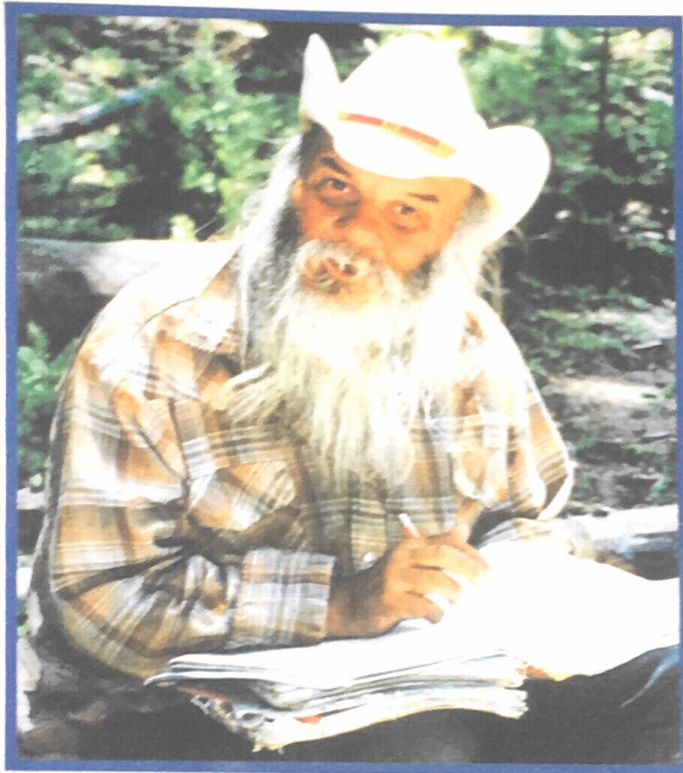


Rainbow Family

Life Stories



by Jodey Bateman.
Interviews with Rainbow
Family of Living Light
folks conducted between
1977 and 2008.

Scanned in 2018.

Jodey Bateman may be
contacted on Facebook.

or jodey.bateman@yahoo.com

15.E

JACKSON UNICORN (JACK)
-"The Gathering of the Tribes in 1968"

[1 of 2]

12 pages

[15.E]

①

Jackson Unicorn (Jack) The Gathering of the Tribes in 1968

(Jackson discusses the 1968 gathering near Nederland, Colorado, which was the forerunner of the 1972 Rainbow Gathering. He also discusses many other matters of counter-culture history)

I don't use the name Unicorn except at Rainbow Gatherings. IF I introduced myself to people in town like that, they'd get confused.

I was born December 25, 1942 in Rochester, New York. My father was a white collar executive type for Taylor Instrument Company. My mother was a housewife. Those were the days that women didn't have to work.

When I was 18, I went into the Navy for four years. When I got out, I decided to go to New York City to Greenwich Village with my stand-up bass and play music. I had to start out as a drag - the guy who stood outside the coffee house as a barker. Our pay was ten cents a head for every person who came in.

One of the most important jobs of the drag was to keep an eye out for the police on the beat who were walking by.

There was an attempt to hassle or shut down the "basket" coffee houses, small ones that passed a basket for the performers - that was all the pay they got. New York City found an old ordinance

(2)

passed in the 1800's that forbid singing in any of the coffee houses or restaurants. The ordinance had originally been passed to keep loud singing in the open air cafes from disturbing the residents. So they were allowed to have instrumental music, but no singing.

So one of the jobs of the police on the beat in the Village was to enter any coffee house where they heard folks singing and threaten to arrest the singer.

One of the jobs of the drag was to pop his head in the door whenever he saw the police coming down the street and yell "Red light!" The musician on stage would then stop singing and just strum through the rest of the verse.

Then when the cops were out of earshot, the drag would stick his head in the door and yell "Green light!" And the musician on stage would start the verse over and finish the song.

After I got to know the people in the scene better, I was able to start backing up acts with my bass. I became more or less the house bass player for the Four Winds coffee house. I was in Greenwich Village for about nine months until the New York scene got to be too much and we split for Haight Ashbury in October, 1966. The word on the street was the Haight was the happening place to be.

(3)

We left New York in an old car with very little money and panhandled our way across the country by driving from city to city and stopping at colleges along the way. We would approach other young people, tell them we were going to Haight Ashbury and ask for spare change. Most of the hipper college kids had heard of Haight Ashbury and were glad to give money to us, saying they wished they could come too. Three women came along with us.

Haight Ashbury in those days was the foundation of what the Family is today. Love and caring and sharing all you had with your brothers and sisters was what was considered hip behavior.

To think of it in retrospect, it wasn't that beautiful. There was a lot of speed freaks, but it was the acid heads who were putting out the message "God is love! Do your own thing! Share with others!"

I'm sure I remember seeing Barry when I was in the Haight because he hung out with a guy named Gandalf who I knew.

I was in Haight Ashbury until January 1967 when I went back to Denver with a woman I was living with - one of the sisters who came along with us to Haight. I wound up staying in Denver and helping to build the Denver branch of the Family Dog concert hall, which is still there. We remodeled an old dance hall place into a psychedelic

(4)

ballroom. I got a job working in the light show after it was completed. I got to do lights for almost all the big underground groups.

I left Denver in the Fall of '67 and went back to Haight Ashbury and wound up back in New York City in January, 1968. It was an incredibly cold winter in New York that year. Most of the water pipes froze in the old tenement buildings in the East Side. We had no heat. There was a big garbage strike going on in the East Village. There was mountains of garbage in the middle of the street. So we did some dope deals and raised money to go to Coconut Grove, Florida to get out of the cold and the garbage.

Florida is where I met up with Don Kelsey. He said "I'm lonely and I'm calling a gathering of all my brothers and sisters on Sugarloaf Mountain in Colorado. I miss the strength of my brothers and sisters, and I have had the vision of us all getting together and becoming one nation."

Don was a high brother. I spent some time with him that spring in Florida and he told me his experiences. He's spent about two years time walking from the United States down through Central America. He carried a staff that had carvings that he had carved about his journey. He walked a lot through the jungles and ate only what he found.

5

He once ate a large amount of psychedelic mushrooms - a variety that had toxic agents that paralyzed his central respiratory system for a period of time. He told me that he lay in the jungle and prayed to the Creator for each breath for several hours. After that experience, he said that he was totally reborn and changed and lived his life totally by faith.

When I met Don, he was with a very beautiful sister who he considered to be his soul mate. Their strength together was so beautiful that they virtually radiated spiritual energy, which drew many people to them. They had met earlier that year in the middle of the Everglades. Don told me that he had been wading through the swamps for two or three days and found his soul mate wandering. She came out of the cypress trees and they met.

Don asked me to put out the word when I went back to New York City for everybody to journey to Colorado and meet on Sugarloaf Mountain in June. We called it the Gathering of the Tribes. I spent so much time in New York putting out the message to people that I missed the big gathering day. I crashed at one of the Motherfuckers' places in New York. They were very prevalent on the streets. It was hard not to see them. I think originally STP John and Little Brother were some of the folks who the Motherfuckers took care of - like giving them a place to crash and some food. STP John may have

6 been only 19 at the time.

A lot of people thought we were gathering because it was the end of the world - that the asteroid Icarus was hitting the earth. That wasn't part of the message I gave. Many people gathered for the day in June the asteroid was supposed to hit and then left. Barry says thousands were there.

A core group of 100 people stayed for the rest of the summer after the others left. They included the original STP Family and Barry and Sunny - she was with Running Bear then. Also Bear who was from New York was there. He was in on the Motherfuckers' scenes.

Some of us wintered in Boulder. The only job I had from '68 to '70 was when the Boulder cops grabbed me that fall and scraped some pot off my teeth after I ate three joints to get rid of the evidence. So I got a job washing dishes for three months to get probation.

Boulder was clean and nice and the mountains were beautiful. The cops were fairly mellow and there was very few hard drugs. And New York and San Francisco had degenerated, so we said, "Why stay in these big ugly cities when we can be in this nice place?"

We all came back together that spring and camped in the same place again - Peaceful Valley. By '69 the STP Family had grown quite a bit bigger - at least 30 people by then. Their camp was called

⑦

Buccaneer Camp. Through that period of time their choice of drug changed from psychedelics to alcohol. The three major leaders or influences were STP John, Little Brother and Bishop in my estimation.

Sometimes STP John wore a toy cap gun and cowboy hat. He was very much a Peter Pan kind of guy. I remember once on the Hill in Boulder, the cops were accosting STP John and Little Brother for wearing pants with big holes in the butt. They told them they would arrest them if they didn't wear underwear so no one would see their rear ends. So Little Brother and STP John somehow acquired pairs of jockey shorts and wore them on the outside over their Levis.

I met Barry in '68 but I didn't get close to him until '69. He hitched back to Boulder and we wound up camping at a place called Lost Lake with another guy and a sister. This was in July, 1969.

We weren't as hip to the proper survival methods in those days. We made the mistake of drinking water out of the lake and we all got dysentery. I didn't get it as bad as the others because I have a pretty strong stomach. We moved camp down from the lake to along a creek that ran out of the lake.

I remember sitting on a rock in the middle of the stream for many hours. Barry was sitting on a rock downstream from me for many hours also. I don't know what Barry experienced that day, but I had a whole series of visions of the Family rising and growing very large, as it is now. Barry left Boulder that summer.

②

I left Boulder in the Fall of 1969 with other hippies in a spiritual quest and encountered a New Age survival group in Los Angeles based on a master who had lived in Japan and died in 1956 - Meishu-sama. It was called the Johrei Fellowship. It was basically a spiritual healing group.

After I joined that, I moved into a family of people in Echo Park in L.A. who dealt in hash and promoted concerts. In December, 1969, I moved into a commune in Joshua Tree, California. After wintering there, I went to Eugene, Oregon in February, 1970, where I saw Barry again. I returned to Boulder April 10, 1970, and met Nina, my first wife, that day.

Meishu-sama gave knowledge of how to channel light to grow plants. So, being interested in that, Nina and I co-ordinated a big community garden. It was on an old hotel ruins. People were camping there. An Episcopal minister, Father McGwen, helped out. He was the one who married me and Nina. He used to let hippies crash in the church. Some of his congregation were really upset because once hippies were making love on the altar.

In June, 1970, STP John died. The STP Family had been hanging out in a house in Boulder that they felt was their turf. There was two men that took over an upstairs apartment in the house. They were not allowing any of the STP Family to come there any more.

STP John became very angry at the brothers in this apartment. On the day he died, he had gotten very drunk on whiskey which was unusual. He usually drank wine.

9

He decided to confront these individuals and Bishop couldn't talk him out of it. John insisted on going upstairs to confront these two people alone, so Bishop waited outside at the bottom of the stairs.

Bishop told me he could hear a very heated argument between John and one of the brothers in the house. Then he heard two or three gunshots and heard John scream a couple of times. Then he heard the brother who lived in the apartment running down the stairs.

Bishop flashed and somehow knew STP John was dead. He stabbed the brother who was running down the stairs. Bishop ran off, thinking he had probably killed the brother.

STP John was never a mean person, even though STP were young and crazy and out of control. He never hit anybody in a serious way, drunk or sober. He was a happy-go-lucky person.

Bishop turned himself in to the police after a couple of days. He was 18, so he wound up spending several months in the reformatory at Buena Vista. I remember we all were pretty upset because the guy who murdered John only went to jail for a few months. We put up a plaque in the community garden for STP John. The local rednecks came and ripped up most of the garden.

Little Brother was the next to go. It was in '72 or '73. He had hooked up with a really beautiful sister and they had just had their first child. Little Brother and a bunch of STP Family got together to have a blowout to celebrate the birth. He was happy as a lark. He decided to shoot up some smack, which was something he

10 did very rarely. It was a big mistake. He misjudged the dosage and OD'd.

Bishop died around '76 in the Fall. He might have been 25 then. He had been hassled a lot by the police for months and had been in jail for short periods of time. He was walking down the street holding a whole gram of MDA. A squad car stopped and called him over. He decided to eat the whole gram of MDA, which was 3,000 hits. The police searched him and let him go. He was able to make it to the house of some friends of mine. He was still coherent enough at that point to tell the people what happened. He said he knew he was dying, but not to turn out, because he was ready to go. He said he was going to the spiritual place. He hugged everybody and died within a few minutes.

I stayed in Boulder until 1975 with excursions to gatherings in India and other places. I met Fantuzzi at an ashram in India in Fall 1971. He was traveling with a bunch of Rainbow type hippies who called themselves the Rainbow Gypsies.

We were in India to see Guru Maharaji, the little 13-year-old guru. His father had been a guru and died and passed the lineage on to his youngest son who was Guru Maharaji. Maharaji had come to the US in the summer of '71 because some Boulder freaks did some coke deals to pay for his plane ticket.

(11)

As it turns out, Maharaji wasn't a real master. It was a scam by his mother. Later on he married one of his foremost disciples and disbanded the whole trip.

There was something happening, though, when they gave you the initiation. Receiving knowledge they called it. You saw astral colors and heard celestial bells. The mahatmas were working through him.

Back in Boulder my wife Nina and I had our first child, a son named Baba, on April 16, 1972. We started a renegade branch of the Jodhei Fellowship with close friends of mine. It exploded into a big group after the first official Rainbow Gathering near Granby, Colorado in July, 1972.

I personally never made the gathering at Granby, because on July 1 we started moving onto a ten-acre farm 15 miles north of Boulder that became a center for our healing fellowship.

Barry and the group around him had wanted to stage a gathering like the one on Sugarloaf Mountain in 1968, only bigger. They expected about 5,000 people and they were blown away when they got 20,000. We were planning to join the gathering on the Fourth, but we heard from people coming back from the mountain that it was surrounded by National Guard.

After the gathering, hundreds of freaks came to Boulder and Fantuzzi showed up at one of our

12 weekly Johrei meetings with about 75 Rainbows who had come off the mountain. At least 50 of them decided to stay in Boulder and become members of the Johrei Fellowship. A bunch of them wound up starting a five-acre farm near us making honey - Mathava Honey. It became famous around Boulder. So our group grew from about 20 people to about 70 to about 200 within a year.

A lot of people who had received knowledge from Guru Maharaji joined us. It was very loose - totally different from the more regimented Los Angeles Fellowship. Eventually in 1974, the Fellowship in Japan sent ministers to try to force us to run our group in the straight way as the other branches did. They set up a huge church in Boulder, still going now, and most of us who were first in it quit. I became a renegade. I continue to do the the channeling work without straightening up my act.

Before the Japanese ministers came and tried to make us toe the mark, we were pretty loose. We smoked dope at meetings and stuff. The interesting thing is our hippie group had more incredibly miraculous healings than other groups.

My daughter Tara was born June 29, 1976. That summer Swami Muktananda came through Colorado giving weekend retreats. I went to check it out with my friend Stephen who had originally brought Guru Maharaji to the United States. When we received the zap from Muktananda